



**Directorate of  
Intelligence**

~~Secret~~

25X1

# **Afghanistan's Masood: Building a Durable Insurgency**

25X1

**An Intelligence Assessment**

~~Secret~~

*NESA 87-10024  
April 1987*

*Copy* **360**

**Page Denied**



**Directorate of  
Intelligence**

**Secret**

25X1

# **Afghanistan's Masood: Building a Durable Insurgency**

25X1

**An Intelligence Assessment**

This paper was prepared by [ ] Office of  
Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis, with a  
contribution by [ ] Office of Leadership  
Analysis. It was coordinated with the Directorate of  
Operations. Comments and queries are welcome  
and may be directed to the Chief, South Asia  
Division, NESA, [ ]

25X1

25X1

25X1

*Reverse Blank*

**Secret**

*NESA 87-10024  
April 1987*

Secret

25X1

**Afghanistan's Masood:  
Building a Durable Insurgency**

25X1

**Key Judgments**

*Information available  
as of 2 February 1987  
was used in this report.*

Insurgent commander Ahmad Shah Masood is the dominant resistance leader in northeastern Afghanistan, where he either controls or strongly influences as many as 20,000 insurgents in six provinces. Over the next year he will probably escalate the level of fighting in the northeast, successfully attack isolated Afghan regime garrisons, and disrupt lines of communications to force the diversion of scarce Soviet resources.

25X1

Masood's success in building a durable insurgency in the northeast will prompt guerrilla leaders to give more attention to military and political organization, tactics, and cooperation with other insurgent groups. Masood and other commanders will probably seek increasing assistance—especially highly sophisticated weapons and training—from the United States and other backers of the resistance.

25X1

Masood has significantly strengthened the previously moribund insurgency in northeastern Afghanistan and scored promising military victories. Building on techniques he used to construct a successful organization in the Panjsher Valley, Masood has brought many of the major insurgent groups in northeastern Afghanistan under his control and established alliances with other influential commanders. He has created a political organization, instituted innovative military techniques, increased the pace and intensity of military activity, and developed an impressive second-echelon leadership.

25X1

Masood plans increased activity in urban areas and the establishment of closer ties to insurgent leaders in other parts of Afghanistan. He wants to increase the level of combat to score additional impressive victories to demoralize the Afghan regime and the Soviets and to build his credentials as a leader of national standing.

25X1

Although Masood has successfully reduced the level of factional strife and enlisted fighters from outside his own Tajik ethnic group over the last two years, suspicions and jealousies among the traditionally dominant Pashtuns and the Peshawar elites will prevent him from realizing his goal of national military leadership.

25X1

The Soviets and the Afghan regime regard Masood as one of the most dangerous insurgent leaders and will continue their efforts to kill him. They know he is a hero in the West and that his death or capture would be regarded by the insurgents and their supporters as a major blow.

25X1

**Secret**  

25X1

Masood's death or capture would have a significant impact on the insurgency in the northeast. The resistance probably would not recover for years as morale would temporarily plummet and factional discord again increase. His proteges would carry on the fight, although it would take years for a single leader to emerge who would approach Masood's leadership skills and persuade the diverse northeastern leaders to accept direction.

25X1

Masood must deal with several problems: factionalism— especially between his forces and those of the Hizbi-Islami (Gulbuddin)—undercuts unity efforts; his supply lines are vulnerable; and Soviet and Afghan regime infiltration of his organization complicates the organization of complex offensives. His prospects for continued success, however, are good. His victories last year at Farkhar and Nahrin have sharply increased his forces' morale, and his men are better armed, better trained, and more experienced.

25X1

As a member of the Jamiat-i-Islami, Masood supports a moderate version of Islamic fundamentalism and is not as radical as either Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizbi-Islami or Abdul Rasul Sayyaf's Ittihad-i-Islami Barai Azadi Afghanistan. Relations between Masood and Pakistani authorities are cool but correct, with some Pakistani officers believing that Western journalists are overimpressed with Masood and Masood resenting attempts by the Pakistanis to advise him. We know little about his attitudes regarding cooperation with the United States, but his Western education and anti-Soviet attitudes suggest he is sympathetic to US interests.

25X1

**Secret**

Secret

**Afghanistan's Masood:  
Building a Durable Insurgency**

25X1

**Scope Note**

This is the first in a series of in-depth studies examining efforts by emerging regional commanders in the Afghan resistance to build large organizations emphasizing unity, training, and sophisticated guerrilla tactics.

25X1

25X1

Secret

25X1

**Contents**

	<i>Page</i>
Key Judgments	iii
Scope Note	v
Masood's Strategy: Unify and Organize	1
Political Strategy	1
Forging Cooperation	3
Building a Structure	4
Strengthening Local Control	5
Expansion Plans	5
A Cohesive Military Strategy	5
Central Units	5
Base Areas	7
Demonstrating Success	7
Preparing for the Next Round	7
What Will Determine Masood's Progress?	7
Logistics	7
Weapons and Equipment	10
Money	10
Supply Routes	11
Factionalism	13
Relations With Peshawar	13
Pakistani Attitudes	13
Popular Support	13
Soviet and Regime Threats	14
Soviet Military Operations	14
Subversive Operations	14
Prospects	14
The Future	15
 <b>Appendixes</b>	
A. Masood and His Lieutenants	19
B. Jamiat-i-Islami Party Figures and Commanders Associated With Masood	23

Secret

25X1



Masood poster

25X1

Secret



Secret

25X1

## Afghanistan's Masood: Building a Durable Insurgency

25X1

Ahmad Shah Masood is one of the few Afghan insurgent commanders with a cohesive political and military strategy for waging a protracted guerrilla war against the Soviets. Masood, an ethnic Tajik, has been building an effective insurgent organization since his return from exile in Pakistan in 1978. He has brought together disparate groups and created a formidable political and military force. He has organized insurgent forces in the Panjsher Valley and used them in coordinated offensive and defensive operations.

Analysis of Masood's past practices demonstrates that he emphasizes organization, training, planning, discipline, mobility, and technical expertise. In contrast to many resistance commanders, he has persuaded insurgents to fight outside their native areas. He stresses the importance of local support and is sensitive to local leaders and politics. Masood attempts to meet civilian security and material needs and to dissuade the local population from fleeing to Pakistan.

Masood's military operations have been well planned and tactically sophisticated by Afghan standards. His military operations emphasize retaining the initiative and striking when the chances of victory are most favorable. He maintains pressure on Soviet and Afghan regime forces through low-risk guerrilla tactics such as mining, ambushes, and harassing rocket and mortar fire. His occasional assaults on vulnerable regime garrisons and outposts in the Panjsher Valley have caused significant damage. The regime lost approximately 600 men to Masood when his forces overran the Peshghowr garrison in June 1985. His forces have rarely stood and fought against superior enemy forces, and, when faced with impending offensives by Soviet and regime forces, he has ordered the evacuation of civilians, abandonment of base camps, and dispersal and burial of food, arms, and ammunition.

We believe the Soviets regard Masood as one of the most troublesome insurgent leaders. Since the invasion in December 1979, Soviet and regime forces have launched seven major offensives and numerous smaller operations in unsuccessful efforts to drive Masood's forces out of the Panjsher Valley and cripple his organization.

25X1

### Masood's Strategy: Unify and Organize

Masood is in the second phase of a three-phase political-military strategy. In the first phase he emphasized classic guerrilla hit-and-run tactics while he strengthened his organization in the Panjsher Valley. In the second phase he is attempting to unify all of the insurgent groups throughout the northeast, raise combat activity there, and conduct coordinated attacks on vulnerable regime garrisons. Masood's long-term goal—and the third phase of his strategy—is to initiate a strategic offensive against powerful Soviet and regime bases in the northeast.

25X1

25X1

### Political Strategy

Masood has concentrated on expanding his activities from the Panjsher Valley into other parts of northeastern Afghanistan over the past two years.

he believes a durable insurgency in the northeast will sharply increase the cost of the war there to the Soviets, undermine the regime's efforts at consolidation, and relieve the intense pressure on the Panjsher and other insurgent areas by forcing the Soviets and Afghan regime to divert forces to the northeast. Masood intends to organize the northeastern provinces and improve cooperation among rival insurgent parties,

25X1

25X1

Secret

Secret

---

**Masood in the Context of the Resistance**

Masood is a Panjsheri Tajik who belongs to Burhanuddin Rabbani's Jamiat-i-Islami party. The Jamiat-i-Islami, the only predominantly Tajik party in the primarily Pashtun resistance alliance, seeks an Islamic government and society in Afghanistan, although the tone of its ideology is moderate. Members of the Jamiat-i-Islami are drawn from former students of state religious schools, Rabbani's clerical colleagues, Islamic intellectuals, and members of the Sufi brotherhood of the north. Jamiat relations with most other insurgent organizations are good, but relations with parties affiliated with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf are strained. [ ]

The 3 million Tajiks of Afghanistan form the largest ethnic group after the Pashtuns. Sedentary and without tribal customs, they are divided by dialect, social custom, geography, and, to a lesser extent, by religion. Tajiks serve in a wide range of professions, from agriculture and small business to military and civil service. Compared with the Pashtuns, Tajik society more easily permits the emergence of a leader who lacks social standing or wealth. Tajiks often display teamwork as fighters, unlike the Pashtuns, who are more individualistic. [ ]

The Tajiks of the Panjsher Valley derive their cohesiveness from their attachment to their locale. They have developed special social customs, dialect, and economic patterns, and this localism contributes to rivalry with neighboring Tajik communities. [ ]

The Tajiks of Herat speak the same Persian dialect as the Iranians of Mashhad, with as many as 40 percent of the Herat Tajiks belonging to the Shia branch of Islam. Their level of education is higher than other Tajiks, except for those living in Kabul. The Sunni Tajiks of Herat have intermingled with other ethnic groups in the province, especially the Aimaks and the Pashtuns. [ ]

Northern Tajik communities extend from Badakhshan and Takhar Provinces—where they are in the majority—to Badghis Province. Tajiks in Badakhshan, Takhar, and some areas of Baghlan speak a distinct dialect of Persian known as Badakhshi. The Persian dialect of the other northern Tajiks—those in Faryab, Jowzjan, Balkh, Samangan, Baghlan, and Konduz—is similar to the dialect in Kabul. The northern Tajiks have so intermingled with the Uzbeks that most are fluent in both Persian and Uzbeki. [ ]

The central Tajiks live in Ghazni, Lowgar, Kabul, Parvan, and Kapisa Provinces, speak various dialects of Persian, and are nearly all Sunni. Except for the Panjsheris, they have intermingled with the Pashtuns, and many ethnic Pashtuns in the region have adopted the Tajik language and Tajik social customs. The Tajiks and Pashtuns of these areas have long been on good terms. They would cooperate closely under a single leader. [ ]

using techniques he employed in constructing his Panjsher Valley organization. Masood will also attempt to persuade the civilian population to remain in Afghanistan in relatively safe valleys so they can provide food and shelter to the insurgents and enable him to keep as many men as possible in the field, [ ]

[ ] Jamiat-i-Islami leaders, including the political leadership in Peshawar, regard the area north of the Hindu Kush Mountains as vital to the health of the insurgency because:

- It is a good base for military operations, located in mountainous terrain and not easily penetrated.
- Ninety percent of the prewar civilian population still lives there.
- It has much fertile land good for agriculture. [ ]

Secret

Secret

**Figure 1**  
**Ethnic Groups in Afghanistan**



709993 (A01776) 4-87

25X1

**Forging Cooperation.** Over the past year, we believe Masood has successfully improved cooperation among Jamiat military commanders whose feuding and isolation had hampered operations. Masood says 90 percent of the estimated 75 to 100 Jamiat commanders in the northeast had joined him directly or had affiliated themselves with his organization by the fall of 1986, [redacted]. In the last six months, commanders of forces in several valleys in Baghlan, Takhar, and Badakhshan Provinces have joined Masood, [redacted]. In other areas, he has concluded alliances with local insurgent commanders who are willing to provide assistance in specific military operations but will not take direction from another commander. [redacted]

Masood has not been completely successful in securing the cooperation of insurgent groups in the north-east. For example:

- He has found Hizbi-Islami (Gulbuddin) insurgents to be especially reluctant to accept his leadership, and fighting between the two groups continues despite a truce Masood secured with the group's provincial commander for Badakhshan, [redacted].
- The Jamiat provincial commander for Badakhshan, Basir, is jealous of Masood's position and prestige and has refused to join Masood's alliance. [redacted]

25X1  
25X1  
25X1  
25X1

25X1

Secret

**Secret**

We believe that Masood's success in recruiting allies reflects his increasing political sophistication and sensitivity in dealing with local people who in the past regarded him as an outsider and feared Panjsheri "imperialism." The Andarab Valley guerrillas and civilians now support Masood, in contrast to their defection to the regime in 1982 when Masood's initial attempt to expand his influence failed because of heavyhanded Panjsheri tactics. [REDACTED]

Several factors, in our view, contribute to the local commanders' willingness to work with Masood:

- According to Jamiat press sources, Masood seeks to assuage local fears by giving the commanders in each area important roles in planning and carrying out combat operations.
- He has shown over the years that he can effectively plan and carry out important attacks and has managed more than most leaders to avoid publicized defeats.
- Some insurgent commanders in the northeast are worried about the growing number of regime and Soviet outposts in that area and want help in actions against them.
- He has given credit for successful operations to local commanders, thereby increasing their prestige and alleviating their fears of being eclipsed by Masood.
- He can help local commanders get arms, ammunition, and other supplies by personally requesting them on their behalf from Jamiat leaders in Peshawar or distributing excess captured weapons in return for accepting his authority. [REDACTED]

We believe, moreover, that Masood's organization and efforts illustrate a growing professionalization of regional resistance organizations along similar lines. Ismail Khan in Herat, Mullah Malang in Qandahar, and Jalaluddin Haqqani in Paktia Province are all emphasizing cooperation, establishing rudimentary political and administrative structures, and seeking to expand outside their traditional areas of influence. [REDACTED]

**Building a Structure.** Masood has organized councils of resistance leaders to coordinate insurgent activity,

Masood has taken additional steps to foster political unity across provincial, tribal, and ethnic boundaries in the northeast, [REDACTED]

- In late spring 1986 a separate Military Council of the North was formed to end internal feuding and coordinate the armed activities of Jamiat groups in Badakhshan, Takhar, Konduz, Baghlan, Parvan, and Kapisa Provinces.
- Masood has established a newspaper entitled *Mujahid*, which is prepared and printed in the Eshkamesh area of Takhar Province and distributed throughout the northeastern provinces.
- Masood has moved the Panjsher Military Academy and the central judicial court into the Khailab Valley in Takhar Province, [REDACTED] The military academy trains junior commanders from throughout the northeast, showing them the advantages of cooperation under Masood's leadership, and then sends them back to their home areas to spread Masood's ideas and imitate his military strategy. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

**Secret**

Secret

25X1

**Strengthening Local Control.** Masood has worked to develop local supervisory councils to oversee political, military, and economic affairs, according to the Jamiat press. The development of effective administrative structures at the local level will aid his efforts to obtain money, food, construction materials, couriers, saboteurs, and intelligence agents, as well as strengthen local insurgent forces. Masood apparently devotes much time and energy to consulting with local councils, elders, and insurgent commanders and intends to resolve questions of military deployments, operational areas, military planning, and mediation between rival insurgent groups. [redacted]

**Expansion Plans.** Masood intends gradually to expand his influence, [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] Masood intends to move both farther north and south of the Salang Tunnel area and into the Shomali Plain to widen the scope of his attacks against convoys and protect the main entrance to the Panjsher, [redacted]

[redacted]

#### A Cohesive Military Strategy

Masood's military strategy, in our view, is based on demonstrating the concrete benefit of cooperation among commanders. He has had substantial success in using mixed units of insurgents from several areas to score dramatic victories. [redacted]

**Central Units.** A cornerstone of Masood's military strategy is the creation of "central units"—mixed fighting units from several ethnic groups under Masood's central command—which are used outside their native areas. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] Masood and a few key aides personally conduct training for these units, which



Masood training central units in Takhar Province [redacted]

includes Islamic, political, and military subjects, [redacted]

[redacted] The units receive better weapons than most groups and probably are armed with assault rifles, light machineguns, and rocket launchers. [redacted]

Masood eventually wants to form 10 central units that will be mobile, well trained, knowledgeable of terrain outside their home areas, and readily accepted by local populations. [redacted]

Central unit personnel have to be experienced in combat and have at least a high school education, [redacted]

[redacted] Masood hopes to use these fighters to form a cadre of experienced leaders, who will, in turn, train and lead similar groups throughout the northeast. [redacted]

Masood places great emphasis on military training. The training of a central unit usually lasts from six to nine months and includes instruction in tactics and in the use of individual and crew-served weapons, [redacted]

[redacted] most of the candidates are Panjsheris, but some are selected from other areas and ethnic groups including Tajiks, Pashtuns, Hazaras, and Uzbeks. [redacted]

The central units have internal and external missions, [redacted]

[redacted] Internal duties include organizing insurgent bases, instilling insurgent discipline, educating local fighters, and maintaining law and order among the local population. External duties include organizing operations against targets [redacted]

**Page Denied**

Secret

such as regime garrisons, convoys, fuel depots, and economic installations; assisting local insurgent forces in planning and executing operations; and uniting groups from different insurgent organizations.

[redacted]

**Base Areas.** Masood has established and organized mountain bases in deep valleys in the rugged mountains in the northeast. [redacted] each mountain base has its own “general commander”; tens of group commanders; local defense, mobile, and strike groups; and training areas as well as numerous subbases. Each mountain base has its own civil administration including a judiciary, clinics, and schools. Cave shelters for civilians and insurgents and irrigation channels are being repaired or built, according to press accounts. [redacted]

**Demonstrating Success.** Masood’s successes in over-running the regime garrisons at Farkhar and Nahrin in Takhar and Baghlan Provinces in August and November 1986 demonstrated the potential of the central units and further enhanced his personal prestige. The units, after weeks of careful training and preparation, carried out the assaults [redacted]

[redacted]

**Preparing for the Next Round.** Masood probably will mount more ambitious operations against regime and Soviet targets in the northeast this year. His intelligence apparatus probably has been gathering information on regime garrisons and their weak points for several months as well as on airfields, towns, communications centers, factories, and bridges. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

Masood also intends to intensify organizational and guerrilla activity in cities under regime control, [redacted]

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

[redacted] Jamiat urban guerrillas, probably under Masood’s direction, claimed responsibility for an explosion in front of the Soviet Embassy in Kabul on 28 September 1986, according to US Embassy sources. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

We believe that Masood will continue to maintain his home base in the Panjsher Valley but will probably not earmark large amounts of resources for its use.

[redacted]

25X1

25X1

[redacted] Masood almost certainly will fortify existing base camps in the Panjsher and equip them with heavy weapons, including recoilless rifles and mortars, so they can lay siege to regime garrisons. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

**What Will Determine Masood’s Progress?**

**Logistics**

Masood’s ability to spread his influence and persuade more insurgent groups to join his organization will depend heavily, in our view, on his ability to supply everything from food and clothing to heavy weapons to the insurgents and civilians under his control. If Masood fails to meet the logistic requirements of his alliance, resistance fighters and civilians alike will be more susceptible to regime subversion and more exposed to Soviet and regime attacks. [redacted]

25X1

Secret

Secret

---

**The Fall of Farkhar**

Masood's capture of the regime garrison at Farkhar on 21 August 1986 was a major step in his campaign to increase the tempo of the war in northeastern Afghanistan and marked the first successful deployment of Masood's central units, the multiethnic, specially trained groups he has been developing over the past year. The attack demonstrates Masood's ability to bring together insurgent units from several northeastern provinces and his growing influence and power outside his home base in the Panjshir.

The regime garrison at Farkhar was occupied by a 323-man detachment of the 20th Infantry Division's 75th Infantry Regiment, equipped with mortars, recoilless rifles, and heavy machineguns. It consisted of four or five main bases and several mountaintop outposts. Ministry of State Security, police, and other regime officials were also stationed at Farkhar. There were no Soviet advisers.

Masood deployed approximately 250 to 300 fighters at Farkhar.

They were equipped with recoilless rifles, mortars, and heavy machineguns. Masood also successfully used his first BM-12 multiple rocket launcher during the assault.

He and his commanders reconnoitered the garrison and used the resulting information to construct a military-style "sandboard" with scaled topographical details and cardboard models of the outposts.

provided information on the layout of the garrison as well as the location of the minefields. Each commander was assigned a specific objective in a plan for a conventional infantry attack on the garrison.

In the initial attack against the garrison, the insurgents captured all but one of the main bases and one of the outposts.

the surviving regime outpost provided considerable covering fire for the surviving base and prevented the operation from achieving complete success on the first day. The assault resumed the next morning following a meeting between Masood and his commanders to discuss tactics. The insurgents believed that failure to capture the entire garrison would be viewed as a regime victory. Masood's forces captured the surviving main base after destroying the surviving outpost with a rocket barrage.

The fall of Farkhar resulted in the death of 110 and the capture of 290 regime personnel and a large amount of weapons and equipment at relatively low cost to the insurgents. Insurgent casualties were four killed and two wounded. We believe the successful assault was due in large part to Masood's planning and the use of trained insurgents as well as the absence of regime air and artillery support, Soviet advisers, and reinforcements. Masood's success at Farkhar apparently encouraged him to go ahead with a similar—and equally successful—attack on the regime garrison at Nahrin in mid-November.

A combined Soviet and regime force mounted an operation to retake Farkhar in early November. Masood's insurgents conducted a series of running ambushes against the force all along its route and forced it to withdraw temporarily from the Farkhar area following a six-hour attack. The Soviet and regime force has since reoccupied Farkhar and is establishing at least a temporary garrison there.

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret



**Page Denied**

25X1

**Weapons and Equipment.** Although Masood claims he captures 80 percent of his arms, ammunition, and equipment, we believe he is exaggerating and that he depends heavily on external support, especially for heavy weapons and large quantities of ammunition for field guns, rockets, recoilless rifles, mortars, and small arms. He will also need specialized military equipment such as direction-finding equipment, light-enhancing night binoculars, cameras with telephoto lenses, sleeping bags, boots, clothing, and jackhammers, [REDACTED] Masood also intends to move from the mountains into lower areas and will probably seek to upgrade his air defense capabilities at that time. [REDACTED]

**Money.** Masood continues to require large sums of money to support his rapidly expanding organization and maintain the pace of his efforts. He provides financial aid to refugees and families of insurgents killed in battle as well as buying food and clothing for his insurgents, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Masood also needs money to pay for shipping equipment and supplies from Pakistan and building additional mountain bases, [REDACTED]

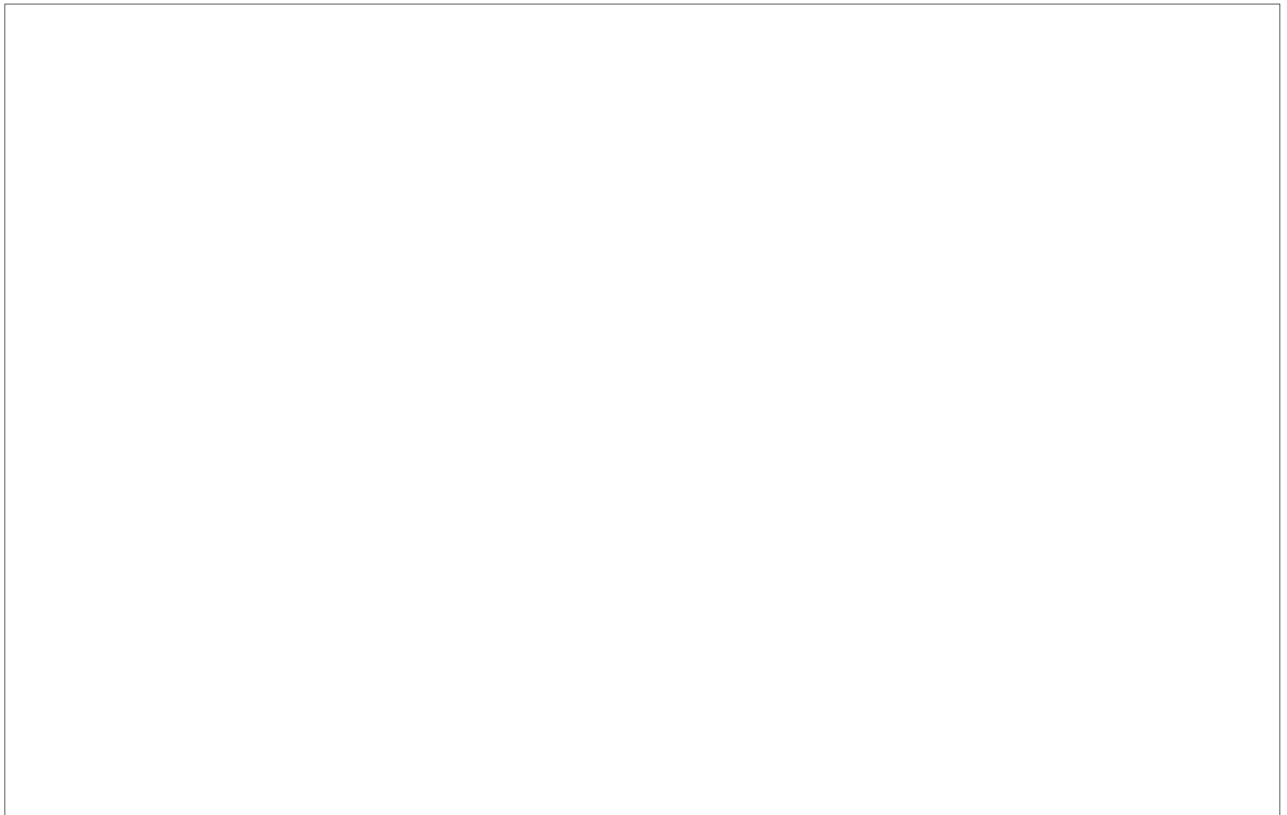
[REDACTED] He provides financial aid to other insurgent groups when they are financially strapped, [REDACTED]

25X1  
25X1

25X1  
25X1  
25X1  
25X1

25X1

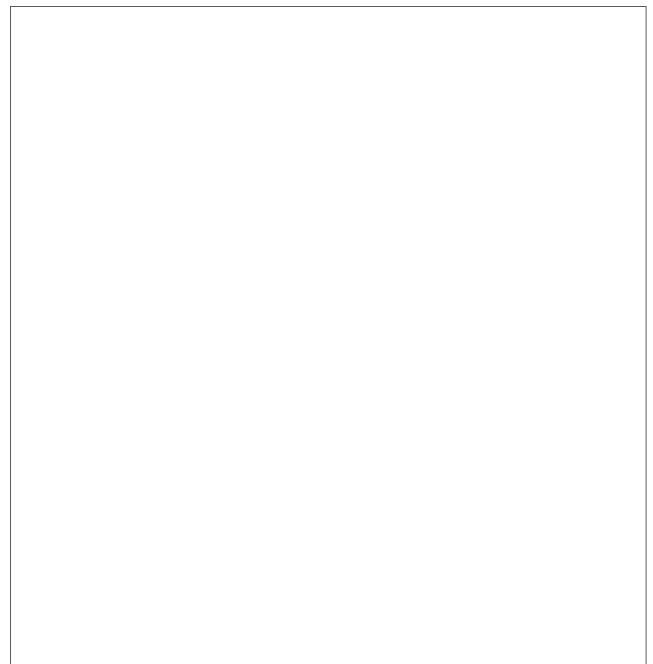
25X1



[redacted] Masood's sources of financial support include:

- Taxes on the civilian population authorized by Islamic law, including 5 percent of salaries, 10 percent of crops, and 2.5 percent of livestock.
- Taxes on gemstones, with lapis lazuli and emerald merchants paying 5 and 10 percent, respectively, of their estimated profits in Pakistan.
- Sale of excess captured weapons to insurgent commanders in his immediate area.
- Financial aid from Western humanitarian relief organizations and Arab groups.
- Financial support from the Jamiat-i-Islami in Peshawar, although Masood continues to complain of inadequate financial and material support from this source. [redacted]

**Supply Routes.** Masood must contend with long and vulnerable supply lines, a problem that, in our view, will intensify as he attempts to expand his political and military influence:



25X1

25X1

25X1

**Page Denied**

[redacted]

also criticized the party for inadequate material support, especially heavy weapons and ammunition. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

We believe Masood enjoys excellent relations with Jamiat-i-Islami leader Burhanuddin Rabbani and has powerful allies in the party hierarchy, which should help him retain his share of the aid provided by the party. Rabbani's control of money, weapons, and equipment received by the Jamiat-i-Islami, the increasing isolation of the extreme fundamentalist clique, and Masood's powerful allies in the party's Political Committee undercut potential rivals, [redacted] 25X1 [redacted] 25X1

**Pakistani Attitudes**  
Relations between Masood and Pakistani authorities are cool but correct. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

**Factionalism**  
Disputes with other insurgent groups frequently result in armed clashes, divert scarce military resources, and distract Masood's senior leaders. [redacted] [redacted] many of the conflicts can be traced to longstanding local feuds and jealousies between rival ethnic and religious communities. US Embassy sources indicate Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Hizbi-Islami (Gulbuddin) party, who is jealous of Masood's reputation and fears Masood's expansion will cut into his political influence, encourages his largely Pashtun supporters to resist Jamiat expansion into their areas and ignore Masood's offer of military cooperation. [redacted]

[redacted] Ma- 25X1  
sood resents attempts by Pakistani authorities to advise him and sees such efforts as an attempt to control his organization. He also blames the Pakistani authorities, as well as the Jamiat-i-Islami, when he fails to get all the supplies and support he needs. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

**Relations With Peshawar**  
Masood's relations with Jamiat leaders in Peshawar are generally good, although he has sometimes been critical of logistic support from the party, [redacted] [redacted] Masood's organization maintains a provincial representative in Peshawar to lobby for aid. [redacted] [redacted] Masood has

**Popular Support**  
Although [redacted] 25X1  
Masood continues to command the support of the majority of civilians in the northeast, he recently had some difficulty maintaining the loyalty of local civilians. [redacted] 25X1 25X1  
[redacted] Insurgent 25X1  
infighting and indiscipline probably have caused some civilians to flee to Pakistan or collaborate with the regime. [redacted] 25X1

Masood has used force and persuasion, with some success, to prevent widespread civilian flight. He has forbidden refugees in his areas to flee to Pakistan and is relocating refugees to more secure areas in the northeast. [ ] He has provided refugee aid in the form of money and ration cards to families of deceased insurgents and to those families that have been deprived of a livelihood by the fighting. [ ]

#### **Soviet and Regime Threats**

**Soviet Military Operations.** Intense Soviet and regime military operations against Masood's base areas may occasionally disrupt his plans and prevent him from increasing military pressure in the northeast.

[ ] Soviet and regime forces launched two large operations in northeastern Afghanistan last summer, employing heliborne assaults and nearly 1,000 vehicles—including armor, self-propelled artillery, and multiple rocket launchers—as well as heavy air support. Such operations result in the cancellation of planned operations as insurgents seek to avoid the overwhelming firepower of these forces. Moreover, widespread bombing of villages and farms results in localized food shortages and heavy casualties, which undermine insurgent and civilian morale. [ ]

**Subversive Operations.** A major threat to Masood's success, in our view, is regime subversive operations aimed at sharpening rivalries in his group. [ ]

[ ]

[ ] The regime's National Fatherland Front provides some food and other support to victims of the war to undercut popular support for the insurgents. [ ] Both the Soviets and the regime almost certainly intend to continue their attempts to assassinate the more effective insurgent commanders. [ ]

#### **Prospects**

We believe Masood's reputation for success as a fighting leader and his growing abilities to deal with ethnic and local rivalries will enable him to spread his

---

#### ***The Cease-Fire Question—A Moot Issue***

*Masood seriously considered a Soviet cease-fire proposal for the Panjsher Valley in August 1985 but rejected it after concluding he had more to lose than the Soviets. Masood sought the advice of his commanders, mullahs, and Jamiat chief Rabbani and learned that many of his followers were opposed, [ ] He had considered accepting in order to operate in other militarily important areas, build his organization in the northeast, and relieve pressure on the Panjsher Valley, [ ]*

*The Soviet Union and the Afghan regime probably have given up their attempts to negotiate a cease-fire with Masood. [ ]*

[ ]

[ ] *Regime press reports indicate a Special Revolutionary Court met in mid-July and tried Masood and one of his top lieutenants in absentia and sentenced them to death, along with several other top insurgent commanders. [ ]*

influence and further augment his forces and capabilities. Although he may suffer setbacks, we expect Masood over the next year to successfully attack regime garrisons over a wider geographic area, while at the same time continuing guerrilla-style attacks on convoys and outposts. In our view, Masood's successful prosecution of attacks on relatively difficult targets and his successful building of alliances will convince other guerrilla leaders of the advantages of careful planning, unity, organization, training, and tactical cooperation. [ ]

Masood's long-term prospects depend, to a large degree, on the Soviet response. Despite Masood's growing strength, there has been no concerted effort by the Soviets to redeploy their forces or alter operations in the northeastern Hindu Kush. A deployment

25X1

25X1  
25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

---

**Soviet and Regime Forces in the Northeast**

*We believe that the Afghan regime's military assets are inadequate to counter the threat that Masood poses. The provinces of Baghlan, Konduz, Takhar, and Badakhshan—where Masood is strongest—contain only one regime division scattered in three regiment-size and four battalion-size garrisons.*

*There are many smaller regime posts, such as Farkhar, scattered around these provinces, but they have little military capability and are vulnerable to Masood's assaults.*

*Soviet and regime forces assigned to the northeast are, in our view, inadequate to prevent the continued buildup of Masood's organization. A Soviet motorized rifle division and an independent motorized rifle regiment—a total of 12 motorized rifle battalions plus supporting armor and artillery—are assigned to the northeastern provinces. Many of these battalions are assigned to road security duties along the Kabul-Termez and the Keshem-Feyzabad roads, as well as manning a security perimeter around Khanabad.*

*An attack helicopter regiment is based at Konduz, but there are no fixed-wing aircraft in the immediate area. The Soviets also have six KGB border security battalions in the area. The Soviets could respond to Masood's campaigns either by frequently deploying forces from other parts of the country for temporary operations in the northeast or by stationing more units permanently in the northeastern Hindu Kush. Soviet garrisons, however, are under considerably less risk of attack by Masood's forces.*

*In the Panjsher, a regime infantry division, a Soviet motorized rifle regiment, and a Soviet airborne battalion are garrisoned to hinder attacks on the Kabul-Termez highway. The furthest regime penetration is at Peshghowr at the junction of the Hazara Valley.*

---

of Spetsnaz or airborne troops in the area would pose a greater threat to Masood's plans. Moscow probably would make more use of aircraft based in the Soviet Union. Continued success by Masood so near the Soviet border probably would provoke systematic campaigns to eliminate most organized resistance, a tactic employed by the Soviets early in the war because of similar concerns.

The death or capture of Masood, in our view, would have a dramatic impact on the insurgency in the northeast. The resistance probably would not recover for years as morale plummeted and factional discord increased. We believe a new and strong leader would eventually emerge from the cadre of second-level commanders Masood has developed over the years, but his successor would have to establish his leadership and combat credentials as well as succeed in persuading other insurgent groups to coordinate their activities.

Longstanding ethnic animosities and personal antagonisms, in our view, will prevent Masood from realizing his dreams of national leadership. The Pashtun clans and tribes of the heavily populated eastern province believe that, as in the past, they should dominate Afghanistan and would be unlikely to accept an ethnic Tajik as a leader, no matter how impressive his military credentials.

We believe that the Pakistanis also will continue to regard Masood as an opportunist, no more worthy of full support than leaders in other parts of the country.

**The Future**

Masood's efforts have major implications for the insurgency as it tries to maintain continued military pressure against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. As Masood's operations become more far reaching and sophisticated, his financial and material requirements will continue to increase. He will almost

**Page Denied**



**Secret**

certainly seek to obtain more sophisticated weapons—including anti-air weapons—to combat the regime's technologically superior forces. Masood will continue to need large amounts of money and humanitarian aid to care for civilians who have lost everything in the fighting. Masood probably will also seek additional tactical and leadership training in Pakistan to strengthen his organization. [REDACTED]

25X1

Another impact of Masood's efforts will be greater combat activity in areas of the northeast that have, to date, seen little intense fighting. Prolonged combat operations almost certainly would result in a new surge of refugees from the northeastern provinces to Pakistan, further straining Pakistan's ability to provide aid and maintain internal stability. Deteriorating security close to the Soviet border will almost certainly result in an increase in Soviet and regime operations and make it even more unlikely that a viable pro-Soviet regime could survive a Soviet withdrawal.

25X1

We know little about Masood's attitudes toward the United States, but his Western education and anti-Soviet attitude suggest he would be sympathetic to Western concerns and open to cooperation if he had a major leadership role in a post-Soviet Afghanistan.

25X1



Secret

## Appendix A

### Masood and His Lieutenants

25X1

#### Ahmad Shah Masood: Lion of the Panjsher



#### The Pen and the Sword

Unlike many resistance leaders, Ahmad Shah Masood has a formal education and experience in guerrilla warfare that predates the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. After attending the highly rated Istiqlal Lycee Francais in Kabul, he studied engineering at Kabul University and became active in the Muslim Youth Organization. He joined the student underground in 1973 when Mohammad Daoud overthrew the monarchy and, one year later, fled to Pakistan with other student dissidents. According to the Western press, he received training in guerrilla warfare from the Pakistanis. While in self-imposed exile, he apparently returned to the Panjsher Valley several times in the late 1970s to launch raids on government outposts. By 1979 he had set up his own operation in the valley, this time in opposition to the Communist regimes of Hafizullah Amin and Nur Mohammad Taraki. [redacted] he had only a few weapons in his possession and a handful of men, mostly fellow Panjsheri students. To the best of our knowledge, Masood has not left the country since 1979. [redacted]

Masood has applied his educational experience and intellectual pursuits to the resistance cause. [redacted]

[redacted] he has drafted former classmates from Kabul University to serve as advisers and immediate subordinates. He frequently discusses the strategies of Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara. He is well read on their works as well as those of Charles de Gaulle, Regis de Bray, and Vo Nguyen Giap and credits them with his success as a guerrilla leader. H25X1 has similarly used his knowledge of the Koran to recruit and subsequently mobilize supporters, [redacted]

25X1

25X1

Masood has also put into practice Napoleon's tenet that organization and training are more important than weapons. [redacted]

25X1

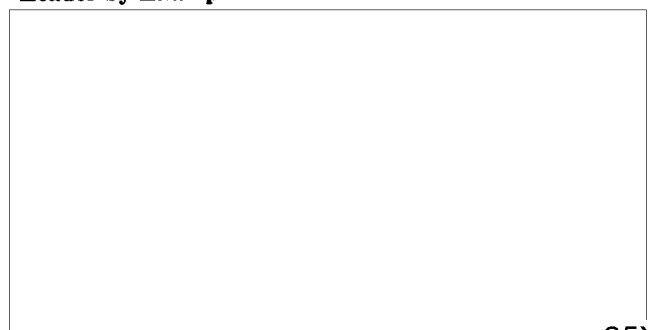
new recruits undergo three months' instruction, which includes physical training, tactics, and indoctrination on current affairs and the nature of Communism. Masood's "warfare" schools also train fighters from other Jamiat groups, [redacted]

25X1

25X1

#### Leader by Example

25X1



25X1

Masood's men respect his rigorous self-discipline, [redacted]

Although the member of a wealthy, landowning family in the Panjsher Valley, he leads a simple life. [redacted]

25X1

25X6

25X1

Secret

Secret

Masood demands similar discipline from his men. He insists upon their complete obedience and loyalty, according to the Western press. In 1982 a regime police officer confirmed that he will tolerate no insubordination or opposition. [redacted]

[redacted]

A man of action, Masood leads his men in battle. He personally selects his commanders, [redacted] and is directly involved in training his troops. He mingles and jokes with his men and is concerned about their welfare. [redacted]

Masood is equally concerned about the civilian population. [redacted] he is admired by the local population because of his honesty and common touch and because he has shared their suffering. He sends out advance parties to lay the groundwork for local acceptance of his forces by the people, stressing the holy nature of the conflict and subsequently recruiting and mobilizing them. He has set up a Panjsheri administrative framework that includes political, judicial, and taxation systems. He has helped resettle families forced from their homes by the war, encouraged private enterprise to stimulate the economy, opened schools, and launched a drive against drug abuse and trafficking. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Potential Successors to Masood

**Azim**  
*Deputy to Masood*

An early follower of Masood, Azim serves as one of three principal deputies on Masood's staff. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

**Gada Khan**  
*Deputy to Masood*



A close friend and one of three principal deputies to Masood, Gada has probably played a major role in Masood's military successes in the northeast. He is Masood's best planner and organizer of military operations, [redacted] He was in charge of resupply and foodstuffs during the successful assault on Farkhar garrison in August 1986, and in the past he has conducted operations in the Andarab Valley. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

25X6

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X6

25X6

25X6

25X1

Secret

Secret

**Mirzah***Commander, Peshghowr Region*

Masood considers Mirzah to be one of his top commanders. [REDACTED]

About 41, he is one of the oldest commanders in the Panjsher Valley. [REDACTED]

**Mohammad Panah Khan***Deputy to Masood*

Panah is one of Masood's most capable commanders and older friends [REDACTED] One of Masood's three principal deputies, he earned his reputation as an effective, bold, and energetic commander because of his forces' successful ambushes of Soviet and regime convoys traveling along the strate-

gically important Salang Road south of the Salang Tunnel to Jabal os Saraj. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he is organizing forces in the Eshkamesh area of Takhar Province. A native of the Panjsher, he was a student before joining the war effort. Panah is in his midthirties [REDACTED]

**Saranwal Mahmud***Deputy Commander, Panjsher Valley*

A theologian before the war, Saranwal is in charge of resistance operations in the Panjsher Valley while Masood concentrates his activities elsewhere in the northeast. Because he is Masood's trusted deputy in the valley, he is considered a viable candidate to succeed Masood. [REDACTED]

Secret

**Ahmad Zia**  
*Brother of Ahmad Shah Masood*



In our opinion, Zia has the necessary military and political credentials to make him the most serious contender to succeed his brother Ahmad Shah Masood as Panjsher Valley commander. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] Zia is one of his brother's most trusted lieutenants, [redacted] Since 1982 he has been involved in organizing transport of supplies to Masood's resistance forces. Although based in Peshawar, at the Panjsher House, where he is responsible for military affairs, he often travels between Afghanistan and Pakistan carrying funds, weapons, and ammunition to the Panjsher Valley. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] he gained a reputation as a capable field commander in the early 1980s when he was the Jamiat commander in the Deh Parian area in the upper Panjsher and earned the respect of the resistance rank and file. As a result of his years in Peshawar, he probably has also gained valuable political experience in dealing with leaders of the Jamiat-i-Islami, other resistance alliance members, and foreign aid donors to procure and ship military supplies. He has a personal tie, as well, to Jamiat leader Burhanuddin Rabbani: in 1985 he married Rabbani's daughter. Zia attended the highly rated Istiqlal Lycee Francais in Kabul where he learned French. To publicize the resistance cause he has traveled to Europe and the United States. He is about 29 [redacted]

25X1  
25X1

25X1

## Appendix B

25X6

### Jamiat-i-Islami Party Figures and Commanders Associated With Masood

25X6

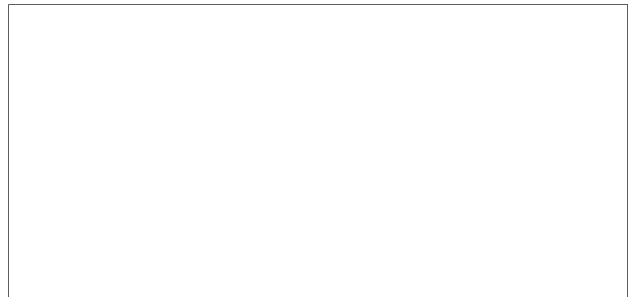
#### Jamiat-i-Islami Figures in Peshawar

##### Mohammad Ayub

*Chairman, Military Committee*

An Islamic fundamentalist member of the Jamiat-i-Islami, Ayub is Masood's main rival in Peshawar.

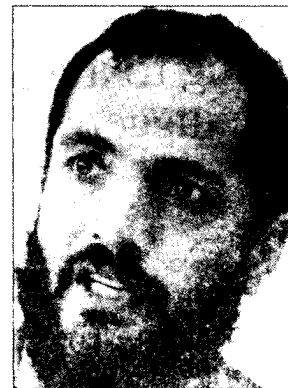
[redacted] Responsi-  
ble for judging the merits of requests for arms from  
field commanders and for distributing ordnance,  
Ayub has tried to block aid to the Panjsher. He has no  
military background. [redacted]



25X1

##### Mohammad Ishaq

*Chairman, Political Committee*



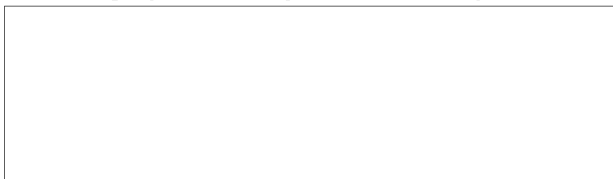
25X1

25X1

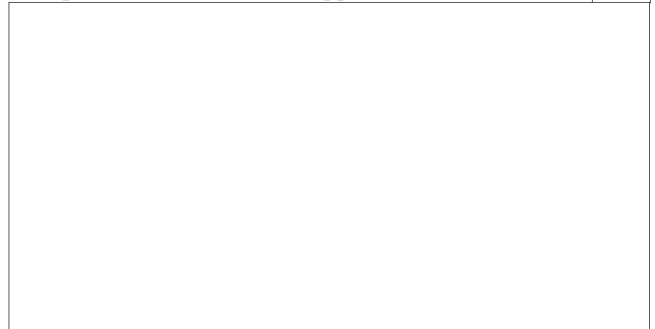
##### Dr. Abdul Hai

*Masood's Representative in Peshawar*

Abdul Hai, Masood's representative to Burhanuddin Rabbani, is unusual among resistance leaders for his ability to organize disparate members of the seven-party resistance alliance into a cohesive, productive unit. He heads the Jamiat Education Committee, and in November 1986 the other six education committee heads elected him the resistance alliance's chairman and spokesman on education matters. He impressed US Agency for International Development officials at a meeting in December 1985 by supplying requested statistics and materials and by deflecting his colleagues when they became bogged down in rhetoric. Before coming to Peshawar in 1985, Hai was Masood's deputy in the Panjsher for several years.



Ishaq is a longtime confidant of and adviser to Masood. One of the movement's most forceful and articulate international spokesmen, he travels frequently to Europe and the United States to gain recognition and financial support for the resistance. [redacted]



25X1

25X1

25X1

**Masood Khalili**

*Jamiat-i-Islami spokesman;  
member, Political Committee*

Khalili, a well-informed conduit for news of the insurgency, is Mohammad Ishaq's deputy on the Political Committee. [redacted]

[redacted] Khalili speaks excellent English and sometimes serves as an interpreter. [redacted]

**Mohammad Yahya Masood**

*Spokesman for Ahmad Shah Masood*

Yahya Masood, an older brother of Panjsher Valley commander Ahmad Shah Masood, [redacted]

[redacted] he does not enjoy the prestige of his younger brothers Masood and Ahmad Zia, mainly because he has no fighting experience. [redacted]

**Selected Commanders Associated With Masood**

**Mohammad Arif Khan**

*Commander, Konduz Province*

Arif is an experienced commander who values his relationship with Masood and hopes to expand it, [redacted]

[redacted] His style of leadership resembles that of Masood. [redacted]

**Aryanpur**

*Commander, Keshem Valley, Badakhshan Province*

A member of the Council of the North, Aryanpur is a striking example of a successful military commander who has adopted many of Masood's strategies and methods. He has been a close ally of Masood for five years, [redacted] and in August 1986 he sent some of his men to help Masood's forces in the Farkhar garrison assault. [redacted]



Secret

[redacted]

[redacted] 25X6  
[redacted] Najmuddin is popular with his men and with the local population and enjoys talking to Westerners. He greatly admires Masood and Jamiat Keshem Valley commander Aryanpur. [redacted] 25X6

Aryanpur displays a public image similar to Masood's. He is approachable and enjoys talking to foreigners. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X6  
[redacted] 25X1  
[redacted] 25X1

**Abdul Hai**  
*Commander, Baghlan Province*  
Hai has had a long, but sometimes tense and competitive relationship with Masood. He uses many of the same techniques in establishing control over his troops and the local population. [redacted] 25X6

[redacted] 25X1  
[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X6  
[redacted] 25X1  
[redacted] 25X1

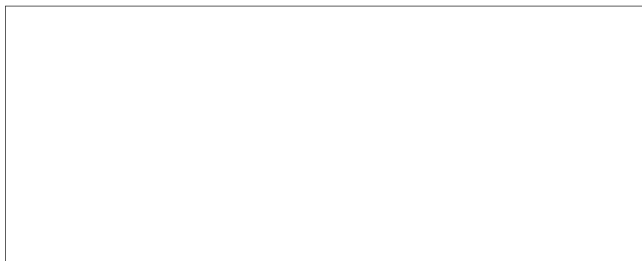
**Tariq Saheb**  
*Commander in Laghman Province*  
Although Tariq has not been as effective militarily as other Jamiat commanders associated with Masood, the latter still considers him a valuable ally and an individual with potential to expand his influence, [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

**Najmuddin**  
*Commander, Varduj Valley, Badakhshan Province*  
Najmuddin's successes on the battlefield are the result of his military expertise and ability to forge relationships and run joint operations with other resistance figures, including Masood. He plans strategy well. [redacted] 25X6

Secret

**Secret**



25X1

**Secret**

**Page Denied**

**Secret**

**Secret**